



Lincoln Highway News, Winter 2001

What is the Lincoln Highway?

The Lincoln Highway is a 3300-mile long road stretching across the United States from New York City to San Francisco. Its creation was the result of the first successful effort to create an all-weather transcontinental highway specifically for automobiles. Carl Fisher, Prest-O-Lite headlight manufacturer, launched the idea of developing a coast to coast highway in 1913. Fisher was soon joined in the promotion of this road, named the Lincoln Highway, by a cadre of executives from the automobile, tire, and Portland cement industries who used patriotic appeal and mass marketing to mastermind a national "good roads" campaign.

The Lincoln Highway began as a miscellaneous collection of downtown streets, country lanes, and old trails marked with signs showing the "L" rectangular graphic reproduced in this newsletter and emblazoned in red, white, and blue. While the confusing and haphazardly maintained condition of the early Lincoln Highway illustrated the long-neglected nature of the American roads inherited by the automobile, by the 1920s, it had become the nation's premier cross-country thoroughfare and a testing ground for new road and bridge-building techniques. A dynamic, commercial roadside emerged, pioneering the marketing of gas, food, lodging and other motorist services through innovative architectural form and design.

Today, the roads that comprise the Lincoln Highway approximate sections of the present day Federal and State Highway System: U.S. 1, 30, 40, 50, and I-80 traversing New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, and California. Early in its history, the Lincoln Highway was also routed through the northeastern corner of Colorado. This website includes a [national map](#) of the highway.

Why is the National Park Service studying the Lincoln Highway?

In December 2000, a bill was passed by Congress and signed by the President directing the National Park Service to coordinate a comprehensive study of the routes of the Lincoln Highway. This Special Resource Study (SRS) will evaluate the highway and related resources according to four criteria. An area is considered nationally significant if it is an outstanding example of a particular kind of resource and retains a high degree of integrity as an unspoiled example of that resource. To be determined suitable for inclusion in the National Park System, an area must represent a theme that is not already adequately represented in the system or already protected by another agency. In evaluating whether or not the Lincoln Highway would be a feasible addition to the National Park System, the SRS team will consider land ownership, acquisition costs, costs of staffing, threats to the resource

and local interest in long-term preservation. Fourth, potential new units of the National Park System must require direct management by the National Park Service, instead of alternative protection by other public agencies or the private sector.

The Lincoln Highway SRS will also present management alternatives for long-term preservation of the highway, including alternatives involving state and local governments and private sector organizations. An environmental impact statement describing the potential environmental impacts of each management option will accompany the study.

A team of NPS staff with expertise in history and preservation of roads and trails, cultural landscapes, and planning from 4 NPS regions (Northeast, Midwest, Intermountain, and Pacific West), the NPS National Center for Cultural Resources, and the Federal Highway Administration will work together on this Special Resource Study. The Midwest Regional Office will have the lead for the study, which is expected to take three years to complete.

National Lincoln Highway Guide Published; National Lincoln Highway Route Viewer Available

In July 1999, Congress directed the National Park Service to conduct a study on the historic and cultural significance of the Lincoln Highway. In response, the National Park Service conducted an preliminary inventory of the highway and its resources. That project resulted in two documents: the National Lincoln Highway Historic and Cultural Resource Guide and the National Lincoln Highway Route Viewer.

The [Resource Guide](#), which will be available electronically soon through this website, is a 250-page document describing in detail the history and historical geography of the highway both on a national scale and state-by-state. The Resource Guide also lists Lincoln Highway properties on the National Register of Historic Places, Lincoln Highway Landmarks, and contacts for each state.

The National Lincoln Highway Route Viewer contains mapping data on a set of CD-ROMS. The [maps](#) on these CDs can be viewed on a variety of scales, from state-wide to block-by-block. The software to view the information on these CDs, MapInfo Proviewer, is on the CDs themselves, so they are readable from almost any computer. The Route Viewer will also be available through this website.

These two documents were developed collaboratively among the NPS, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, the Lincoln Highway Association, and the State Historic Preservation Officers for each state along the highway. The information collected during the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record study of the Lincoln Highway in Pennsylvania in summer of 1999 fed into this work as well. These documents will provide valuable background to the Special Resource Study Team throughout the study process.

Study Process

This study will proceed on two tracks. The first track, the "planning" track, will focus on the core steps of NPS Special Resource Studies: determining national significance, suitability, and feasibility and the need for direct NPS management, as well as developing management alternatives and assessing environmental impacts of each alternative; and soliciting and taking into account public comments. The second track, the "cultural landscape study" track,

is designed to gather in-depth information specific to this resource. The Lincoln Highway is an unusual resource for an NPS Special Resource Study in that it covers diverse cultural landscapes, ecosystems, and geographic regions over such a large area. The cultural landscapes study track will build on the initial inventory of Lincoln Highway resources already developed. The schedule for this project is described below.

Opportunities for Involvement

Public involvement is essential to the success of this effort. We encourage you to be involved throughout the study process. Please send written comments to the address above. Please be aware that due to public disclosure requirements, the NPS, if requested, is required to make the names and addresses of commenters public. However, individual respondents may request that this information not be released. The NPS will honor your request to the extent allowed by law.

The next Lincoln Highway SRS team meeting is in March 2002. At that meeting, we plan to discuss significance, suitability, and feasibility. We would appreciate receiving your feedback on the general scope of this project and any ideas you would like the team to take into consideration at this meeting by February 15, 2002. Late next summer, you will receive the second issue of this newsletter detailing the team's progress. We will hold at least one public workshop in each Lincoln Highway state next fall to discuss the results of our cultural landscape study and to solicit your ideas on management alternatives. The next newsletter will announce where and when these workshops will be held. We expect to have a draft copy of the Lincoln Highway SRS available for public comment in late summer of 2003.

Study Process and Schedule

Winter/Spring 2002

- Discussion of national significance, suitability and feasibility

Summer 2002

- Cultural landscape field study of routes that make up the Lincoln Highway

Fall 2002

- Initial discussions of preliminary management alternatives

Late Winter 2003

- Public workshops

Spring/Summer 2003

- Drafting of Lincoln Highway SRS, reflecting results of both the field study and the public workshops, and including an analysis of environmental impacts of alternatives

Fall 2003

- Publication of draft study for public comment

Winter/Spring 2004

- Revision and publication of final study
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